



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
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IN REPLY REFER TO

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23 DEC 1999

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
To: Commanding Officer, Naval Dental Research Institute

Subj: MERCURY ISSUES FOR NAVY DENTISTRY

1. As Navy Dentistry aligns itself to deliver high performance healthcare it is incumbent upon us to maintain safety for our patients, staff, and community. As our processes become more beneficial, effective and efficient, they must also be recognized as environmentally safe. During the last few years there have been isolated instances where clinical operations at Naval dental clinics have been perceived as a threat to the environment. In these cases where local inspectors identified elevated wastewater mercury levels, NDRI assisted the commands in meeting or exceeding environmental standards. The ability to deliver dental care in these facilities for our Sailors and Marines was placed in peril. Because of NDRI's dental scientific capability and understanding the operational impact of these actions a halt in the provision of care was averted.

2. In recognition of NDRI's demonstrated expertise in addressing this environmental issue I enlist your organization's lead in developing or guiding procurement of pretreatment systems for dental wastewater. The pretreatment to extract mercury from wastewater prior to release into local sewer systems will ensure compliance with local environmental standards. Your plan to address this tasking should include the following:

(a) Assess current compliance of DTF's in meeting local standards.

(b) Develop strategies to bring all DTF's to compliance.

(c) Develop business case analyses to identify resources/alternatives.

(d) Establish recommended POAMS and priorities.

3. Your assistance in developing a claimancy-wide plan to address this important, highly visible issue is appreciated. My point of contact for this issue is DT1 M. J. Fortier who can be reached at (202) 762-3008 or DSN 762-3008.

J. K. JOHNSON

Assistant Chief for Dentistry